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Preliminary Suggestions
for organization and operation of a

NATION-WIDE EGG AND POULTRY QUALITY CONSERVATION PROGRAM
(based on quality conservation and uniform identification of products)

Introduction

The marketing of eggs and poultry is becoming more important and complex from year to year. Geographic changes in seasonal and annual production, use of different standards and grades of quality, movement in processing and trade channels back and forth across State lines, fluctuating demand affected by consumer income, and the quality and availability of other food products, are factors largely responsible for this condition. A voluntary, nation-wide egg and poultry marketing program, based on quality conservation and uniform identification, has been suggested for improving the present marketing situation.

Under our current system of marketing, producers in most sections of the country lack incentive to produce and properly care for poultry products of acceptable table quality. Consequently, a variable product is received by the consumer. With proper handling and identification, producers, processors, distributors and consumers would be able to properly evaluate these products in relation to price. This would mean more general acceptance of all of these products because suspicions based on uncertain quality would be largely removed. Consumption then at all levels of consumer income can be increased, first, by providing larger quantities of uniformly graded poultry products of high quality, and, second, by eliminating grade variability geographically, seasonally, and within unit purchases.

Experiences of marketing agencies in different parts of the United States demonstrate that maximum poultry and egg consumption with the resultant benefits from increased volume can be achieved by offering consumers a constant flow of uniformly high quality products. All producers, processors, distributors, and consumers, therefore, should be especially interested in marketing developments which will provide a constant supply of uniform and acceptable poultry products. Efficient grading and standardization based on sound research and experience is the cornerstone or basis for the development of a more efficient and profitable marketing program. Other phases of the marketing system also in need of improvement will be greatly benefited by the adoption of uniform standards, grades, terminology, and labeling. Use of uniform grade standards and terminology does not require or even suggest the elimination of trade brands. In fact, it is suggested that trade brands should be continued to strengthen pride on the part of the person or firm packing eggs or poultry and to increase confidence on the part of the dealer and consumer in the grading skill, efficiency, and integrity of such packers.

The following preliminary suggestions have been prepared in response to requests for a program for further consideration. They contain suggestions received from industry members and are intended to promote further discussion and action by representatives of the industry and regulatory and educational officials who are interested.

Objectives

1. To establish a more efficient voluntary marketing program based on uniform standards, grades, and terminology, through which quality conservation and economies in processing and distributing eggs and poultry can be more readily and generally applied.
2. To develop, refine, and administer simple, uniform quality standards and grades for marketing poultry products.
3. To formulate terminology, labels, and designs, to identify graded eggs and poultry products in a manner easily understandable and acceptable to producers, processors, distributors, and particularly to consumers.
4. To encourage each State to consider the establishment of an official, voluntary grade certification program with suitable grade identification, agreements, and supervision.
5. To train, authorize, and supervise inspectors and graders so that efficient grading may be obtained on a uniform basis.
6. To obtain cooperative analysis of marketing problems relating to the conservation of quality and to facilitate use of the best results of scientific research and practical experience in improving the marketing of eggs and poultry products.
7. To develop educational programs, materials, and equipment to acquaint producers, shippers, processors, distributors, and consumers with uniform grade standards, terminology, labels, grading, inspection, and the operation of the quality conservation program.

Program Development

The program should be developed in a democratic manner, by members of the industry, and regulatory and educational representatives.

Official grading work in most States is now administered cooperatively by State Departments of Agriculture or Bureaus of Markets, the Agricultural Extension Service and the Office of Marketing Services because the success of voluntary grading programs is dependent upon well coordinated regulatory and educational activities.

Consequently, it is proposed that State officials now responsible for grading work assume cooperative responsibility for calling together representatives of all agencies interested in the marketing of eggs in each State for a preliminary conference to consider development of a better coordinated marketing program. It is suggested that representatives from processors, shippers, retailers, and consumer organizations, supervisors of vocational agriculture teaching as well as representatives from State departments of agriculture, State college poultry department research and teaching, home economics and extension and others interested or active in marketing activities, should be invited to participate in the conference. The statements under "Introduction" and "Objectives," together with the following outline, are submitted to stimulate thought on some of the principal ideas which have been suggested in previous

conferences and to give the conferences something definite for initial consideration in developing a national program. The conclusions may then be utilized by selected representatives from the States and the Office of Marketing Services to develop a national program to be resubmitted to the respective State groups for final approval and adoption.

Participation

Participation in the program by a State or by an individual industry member should be entirely voluntary. It should be clearly understood that the Federal Government has always operated on the basis of voluntary grading programs for poultry products. If at any time compulsory grading programs are developed, industry rather than Government should take the lead in that direction. Also, any State may establish higher standards and variations in administrative procedure not in conflict with the minimum standards outlined in the national program. But all participating States and participating industry members will be required to comply with the minimum requirements as finally developed in the national program.

Administration

Primary responsibility for administration of the national program within each cooperating State should be assumed by an authorized State agency.

Responsibility for coordination of activities among the various cooperating States logically should be assumed by a central agency such as the Office of Marketing Services so that the national program may operate on a uniform basis and a rapid exchange of ideas and better methods may be effected. The basis for such coordination should be outlined in a memorandum of agreement between the authorized State agency and the central coordinating agency.

Authorized State Agency

The authorized State agency should be composed of representatives of the principal interested groups. It may properly consist of 5 to 9 members, including representatives of the State department of agriculture or the State department or division of marketing, or both, the poultry department of the State college of agriculture, the agricultural extension service, producer groups, consumer groups, marketing groups such as trade associations and industry members participating in the program. The authorized State agency should be responsible for the administration and operation of the program within the State, including supervision of all grading work. It should be provided with sufficient funds from either State appropriation, service fees or a combination of both to function effectively as the administrative authority within the State. It is not proposed or contemplated that there will or should be any radical changes in the present administrative agencies which are supervising grading work. The suggestion on makeup of authorized State agencies is offered as a means of broadening administrative interest and responsibility and to encourage wider participation.

Authorized State Agency Program
and Responsibilities

1. Encourage the use of uniform retail and wholesale grades for eggs and live and dressed poultry. These grades should be based on uniform minimum requirements developed by national committees working in cooperation with the central coordinating agency. Quality and grade standards as finally developed should be approved by the central coordinating agency.
2. To employ and supervise a sufficient number of properly qualified State inspectors to adequately supervise the use of these grade standards by industry members.
3. To hold schools for training and qualifying supervisors, inspectors, and graders in cooperation with central coordinating agency.
4. To render inspection service at all points where service is required and in such manner and at such times as to insure conformity with minimum requirements.
5. To provide for adequate funds to administer official grading programs.
6. To authorize dealers, processors, shippers and other members of the industry to use approved grade designations in accordance with the memorandum of agreement with the central coordinating agency.
7. To conduct annual or semi-annual marketing conferences and plan educational programs to inform producers, handlers and consumers on all details of the State and National programs, including grade standards, terminology, the plan of operation, and its advantages.
8. To cooperate in regional and national conferences to develop and revise the program and develop effective coordinated operation and administration of all phases of the program.

Responsibilities of the Central
Administrative Agency

1. To serve as coordinating agency to assist the authorized State agencies in administering a uniform nation-wide egg and poultry quality conservation program more efficiently.
 - a. To contact authorized State agencies and supervisory personnel in cooperating States for the purpose of developing uniform interpretation and administration of the program and general utilization of the best practices developed in the individual States.

- b. To study utilization of the national uniform grade standards, assist in developing improvements, and approve and issue the national uniform grade standards.
- c. To supervise inspection and grading work, assist in developing efficient and uniform administration of the inspection and grading of egg and poultry products.
- d. To assist in developing educational material and planning educational programs.
- e. To assist authorized State agencies in conducting State conferences and training schools
- f. Arrange and conduct regional and national conferences in cooperation with national committees and cooperating State agencies.
- g. To cooperate with national committees (see page 7)
- h. To compile data and issue reports on the operation of the program.

State and National Conferences

As a means of obtaining and maintaining efficient coordinated effort, it is proposed that annual State and National conferences should be held to consider all subjects and activities associated with the development and operation of the national program. Such conferences should serve to

- (1) Focalize all interest, effort, and ideas of industry leaders in a single major quality conservation program
- (2) Contribute to uniform interpretation of national standards and grades
- (3) Furnish a democratic medium for compromising differences and thus stimulate greater cooperative effort
- (4) Furnish a representative medium for constant refinement and improvement of the structure and administration of the national marketing program.

The following outlines are suggested for the organization and conduct of annual State and National conferences.

- A. Annual State Egg and Poultry Marketing Conferences and Grader Training Schools
(It will be impractical to hold all the schools which may be required for training graders of live and dressed chickens, dressed turkeys and shell eggs and resident samplers for egg-breaking plants at one time and one place. However, this is desirable insofar as possible because of the broader educational

advantages which should be made available at a State conference. Turkey grading schools especially may have to be held at a later date.)

1. To be arranged and conducted by the authorized State agency
2. Time -- during the late summer and fall months and preferably in sequence by States in regions to facilitate participation by the most desirable speakers and Federal representatives and to enable persons to attend more than one State conference if desired.
3. Place -- preferably at the State colleges of agriculture or State departments of agriculture
4. Program suggestions -- (first 2 or 3 days with educational, regulatory, trade association and consumer organization representatives, processors, shippers, wholesalers, retailers, producers, inspectors, and graders invited.)
 - a. Marketing topics and demonstrations (speakers and demonstrations on production, grading, processing, packaging, transportation and retailing of poultry and egg products)
 - (1) Current problems of greatest interest
 - (2) Progress reports on research
 - (3) Materials, production, and uses of packages
 - (4) Demonstration of grades
 - (5) Production problems affecting marketing and marketing problems affecting production
 - (6) Processing problems and progress
 - (7) Any other subjects involved in production and maintenance of high quality of products from producers to consumers
 - (8) Consumer preferences and demands
 - (9) Retailer problems and progress
 - (10) Progress reports on grading and inspection programs, including problems
5. Program suggestions -- (second 2 or 3 days)
 - a. Grader training schools - Shell eggs, live and dressed poultry, and dressed turkeys
 - b. Trade association meetings
 - c. Authorized State agency business meeting

B. National conference each year

1. National conferences are to be called and agenda arranged by the central coordinating agency
 - a. Agenda to include pertinent subjects dealing with the processing, packaging and marketing of eggs and poultry products and especially grade standards and administration of Federal-State grading programs
 - b. Speakers from U. S. Department of Agriculture (research and administrative), State departments of agriculture (marketing and regulatory divisions), colleges of agriculture (research and extension), trade

associations, including processors, distributors and retailers, consumers and Federal and State health departments

- c. Special committees to be selected by vote or appointment as determined by delegates
 - (1) Committees on grade standards for egg and poultry products
 - (a) Subcommittees on shell eggs and egg products and live, dressed, and eviscerated poultry
 - (2) Committee on grade labeling
 - (3) Committee on organization and administration of grading procedure, including financing
 - (4) Committees on education on grade standards, terminology, labels and grading and inspection procedure
 - (a) Subcommittees for producers, handlers, and consumers
 - (5) Committee on inspector and grader training authorization and supervision

2. Attendance (open)

- a. Two official delegates from each State having Federal-State grading agreements, one from administrative personnel responsible for Federal-State program and one from industry members participating in Federal-State grading program. (First year selection of delegates might be based on interest as well as participation)
 - (1) Delegates to be selected by agency responsible for administration of Federal-State grading program and industry representatives by vote of participating members

3. Cooperative relationships

- a. It has been suggested that this proposed conference should be held preferably just before or just after the National Poultry and Turkey Improvement Plan Conferences. In many instances, the same representatives of State departments of agriculture and State colleges of agriculture would be interested in and associated with the administration of both programs. Also, the two programs have many common problems and objectives so that reasonably close coordination would be advantageous to both.

Plans for production should consider market and consumer demands and processing and packaging problems and plans for processing and marketing should consider production problems and limitations.

